

Application No. 10/034,029
Amdt. Dated 03/18/04
Reply to Office Action of 01/15/2004

REMARKS

Claims 1-25 are pending. Claims 1, 16, and 20 are independent claims. Claims 20-24 are allowed. Claims 6, 9, 17, and 18 are herewith cancelled without prejudice. Claim 25 was cancelled in a previous Response. Claims 1, 7, 8, and 16 are amended. Support for the amendment to claim 1 is found in claim 6, and support for claim 16 is found in claim 17. Claim 26 has been newly added. Support for claim 26 is found in claims 1, 10, 11, and 12. Claims 1-5, 7, 8, 10-16, 19, and 26 remain for consideration upon entry of the present Amendment. No new matter has been added.

Examiner's Point 2.

Claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 9, 13-16, and 18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(a) as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,138,885 to Hevenor et al. (hereinafter "Hevenor '885").

Claim 1 is amended to incorporate the subject matter of claim 6 in accordance with the Examiner's indication that claim 6 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims (See Examiner's Point 7 below). Claim 1 is, therefore, allowable over the Hevenor '885 reference.

Claim 16 is amended to incorporate the subject matter of claim 17 in accordance with the Examiner's indication that claim 17 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims (See Examiner's Point 7 below). Claim 16 is, therefore, allowable over the Hevenor '885 reference.

Dependent claims, by definition, add subject matter that further defines the subject matter of the independent claims from which they depend. Because claims 2, 4, 5, and 13-15 depend from claim 1, and because claim 1 is allowable for at least the

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reason presented above, claims 2, 4, 5, and 13-15, because they recite subject matter that further defines the subject matter of independent claim 1, are allowable.

Examiner's Point 4.

Claim 3 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Hevenor '885 in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,875,949 to Hevenor.

Claim 3 depends from claim 1. Claim 1 in amended form has been provisionally allowed. Claim 3 depends therefrom and consequently is believed to be allowable.

Examiner's Point 5.

Claims 10 and 19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Hevenor '885 in view of Japanese Patent JP 63112186 to Koiwa (hereinafter "Koiwa").

Claim 10 depends from claim 1. Because claim 10 depends from a non-obvious allowable claim, claim 10 is respectfully asserted to be allowable.

Claim 19 depends from claim 16. Claim 16 is believed to be non-obvious and is allowable for the reasons presented herein. Because claim 19 depends from a non-obvious allowable claim, claim 19 is respectfully asserted to be allowable.

Examiner's Point 6.

Claim 11 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Hevenor '885 in view of Koiwa as applied to claims 1 and 10, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,398,333 to Mulay et al.

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Claim 11 depends from claim 1. Claim 1 is believed to be non-obvious and is allowable for the reasons presented herein. Because claim 11 depends from a non-obvious allowable claim, claim 11 is respectfully asserted to be allowable.

Examiner's Point 7.

Claims 6-8, 12, and 17 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

As indicated above, claim 1 is amended to incorporate the subject matter of claim 6, and claim 6 has been cancelled. Claims 7 and 8 are amended to properly depend from claim 1.

Claim 12 is written in independent form to include the subject matter of claims 1, 10, and 11 and re-presented as new claim 26.

Claim 16 is amended to incorporate the subject matter of claim 17, and claim 17 is accordingly cancelled.

Accordingly, claims 1, 7, 8, and 16 are believed to be allowable. Applicants therefore request that claims 1, 7, 8, and 16 be passed to issuance.

Conclusion

Applicants believe that the foregoing amendments and remarks obviate the cited rejections. In view of the foregoing points that distinguish Applicants' invention from those of the prior art and render Applicants' invention novel and non-obvious, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider the present application, withdraw the rejections, and allow the application to issue.

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Applicants believe that no fees are due with the submission of this Amendment. If any fees are incurred with respect to this Amendment, they may be charged to Deposit Account No. 13-0235 maintained by Applicants' attorneys.

Respectfully submitted,

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